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26. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF TWO FLYING FISH: *PROGNICHTHYS GIBBIFRONS* (VAL.) AND *EXOCOETUS VOLITANS* LINN. (PISCES: EXOCOETIDAE) IN WEST BENGAL

The marine Ichthyofauna of West Bengal has been described by Talwar *et al.* (1994), and Chatterjee *et al.* (in press). In their accounts there is no mention of the blunt-nosed flying fish *Prognichthys gibbifrons* (Val.) and two-winged flying fish *Exocoetus volitans* Linn., family Exocoetidae from West Bengal, which are known from India as well as tropical and subtropical seas. Recently, the authors came across two specimens, one each of *P. gibbifrons* and *E. volitans* of total lengths 195 mm and 147 mm respectively, caught with drag nets by fishermen of Digha from Bay of Bengal on 22.12.92 and 12.3.96 respectively. The description of both species is given below.

*Prognichthys gibbifrons* (Val.)

**Material Examined:** 1 ex. locality: Digha Hospital Ghat, Coll. S. Talukdar & P.N. Jana, MARC. Regn No. 669, dt. 22.xii.92.

**Diagnostic Characters:** D. 12, P. 16, V.5, A.9, C. 10/12, Predorsal scales 24. Body oblong, gill openings wide, jaws short, pectoral fins elongated, reaching beyond the end of dorsal. First two pectoral rays unbranched. Origin of anal opposite 4th dorsal ray. Ventrals much longer than the head, originating about midway between caudal and eye. Eyes very large, snout blunt when mouth is closed.

**Colour:** Brown above, white below, dorsal and caudal brown. Pectoral gray with lighter

middle region. Ventral with darker rays in middle.

*Exocoetus volitans* Linnaeus.

**Material Examined:** 1 ex., locality: Digha Hospital Ghat, Coll. J. Sarkar, MARC. Regn No. 1665 dt. 12.iii.96.

**Diagnostic Characters:** D-14, P. 14, V.6, A. 13, C 7/9. Body moderately oblong. Gill openings very wide, Jaws short, the premaxillaries and maxillaries separate. Pectoral fins elongated, and reaching caudal base. Ventrals small, originating nearer tip of snout than caudal base. Eyes large. Snout obtuse when the mouth is closed. 6.5 rows of scales between the origin of the dorsal fin and the lateral line.

**Colour:** Bluish along the back, becoming lighter on the sides and beneath. Pectorals greyish.

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